COMIC SHOP NEWS™

Levitz Leads the Legion

Forget those elections taking place in the pages of ***Legion of Super-Heroes***. If you want to know who *really* leads the Legion, you need to look no further than the credits!

Paul Levitz, until recently the President and Publisher of DC Comics, has returned to his first love—comic book writing—now that he's put the incessant demands of the executive life behind him. And not only has he returned to writing, he's returned to writing the book for which he's best known, ***Legion of Super-Heroes***. Apparently, that's good news for the Legion and for the superteam's many readers as well!

The Legion of Super-Heroes, the first teen super-team of the Silver Age, was at one time one of DC's best-selling books; in recent years, the title has struggled to find a direction. Levitz's relaunch is restoring the team's formers stature, but Levitz has further to go before he's satisfied. "We're a ways from getting the Legion back to their commercial status of my youth, when they outsold ***Batman***."

So what's the secret of his ***Legion*** success? "If I have a secret, it's that I think my love of the characters and the complexity of the future shows in the work."

Since Levitz' return to the Legion, the Silver Age's first superteam has appeared in *two* monthly books, both written by Levitz: ***Legion of Super-Heroes*** and ***Adventure Comics***. In the former title, he has presented tales of the 31st century's Legion, the quest for a 31st century Green Lantern, and more. In the latter story, he has focused on untold tales of Superboy and the Legion—but that's about to change.

If that's not enough, there's a third ***Legion*** book in the works: Levitz is joining with *Keith Giffen*—his creative partner on the now-legendary ***Great Darkness Saga***—to reboot a classic Legion adversary in this year's ***Legion of Super-Heroes Annual***.

In both ***Legion*** and ***Adventure***, Levitz has addressed an issue that has intrigued fans for years: whatever happened to the Green Lantern Corps in the 31st century? Levitz's interest in the future of the Green Lanterns long predates his current run on ***Legion***, however. "I've been playing with Green Lantern lore in the Legion since the 1980s—I think the earliest use is the story 'The Origin of the Universe File' in the current ***Great Darkness Saga*** hardcover," Levitz said. "Besides my fondness for that part of DC mythology, I think they fit well together."

(SPOILER ALERT: If you haven't read the most recent issue of *Legion* and don't want to know the identity of the 31st Century Green Lantern, skip this paragraph!)

Rather than bringing in a new character to fill the position of Green Lantern, Levitz has assigned the position to one of the Silver Age's oldest and most beloved superheroes: Mon-El, who first appeared in the pages of ***Superboy*** almost a half-century ago. What led to the decision to make Mon-El the new Green Lantern of the 31st Century? "It seemed like a logical step betwixt his current frustrations with his relationship with Shadow Lass, and his potential destiny as played out in Jim's Adult Legion stories so long ago," Levitz said. "Many years ago, Jim Shooter wrote a seminal story positing the future of the Legionnaires: who married who, what roles they'd take on, etc., and suggested that Mon-el would end up exploring deep space after Shadow Lass' death. I was fascinated by the story when I was a kid, and have played with its elements in many tales since.

"It also fits well with the larger storyline that's been slowly brewing since Titanfall…"

(Spoiler over: resume normal activity)

Levitz and DC have frequently referred to a big ***Legion of Super-Heroes*** event planned for 2011. Will the future Green Lantern mythos play a role in that story? "Yup," Levitz said, but he offered no additional details, other than to say that "there are plenty of clues already there in the stories we've published so far, and there'll be more following. It began in ***Legion #1***, and has been percolating ever since."

What led Levitz to tell two different sorts of Legion stories in ***Legion of Super-Heroes*** and ***Adventure Comics***, rather than presenting one large arc split between two books? "Well, part of it was the different way the series evolved," Levitz said. "I think they're fitting together—but with the Legion's large cast, it makes more sense to have the camera pointed in different directions to cover more."

The retro focus of ***Adventure Comics*** is about to change with January's ***Adventure #522***, which focuses on the new Green Lantern; after that, Levitz will join with acclaimed artist *Phil Jimenez* as of ***Adventure #523*** to spotlight the Legion Academy, where rookie recruits learn to become Legionnaires. How long will this arc run, and is Jimenez on board for the whole thing? "The first story is planned for three issues, and we'll see where it goes from there," Levitz said. "Phil's an old Legion fan, and I hope he'll be around for quite a while."

Any chance that some of those Academy rookies might graduate to Legion status in the coming year? And will the Academy itself play an important role in the big Legion event? "Not sure about graduations yet, but it's possible," Levitz said. "And I suspect the Academy will play a role in the larger story—though I haven't gotten far enough in the plotting to know for sure!"

Will there be crossover story elements in ***Legion of Super-Heroes*** and ***Adventure Comics*** once Levitz and Jimenez launch the Legion Academy stories? "Hope so!" Levitz said.

And if that's not enough Legion for you, later this month Levitz is reuniting with *Keith Giffen* for ***Legion of Super-Heroes Annual #1***, an extra-length tale introducing the all-new, all-deadly Emerald Empress, who "devastates the Legion so completely that one Legionnaire will never be the same," DC said in its solicitation.

If you have any doubts that the Levitz-Giffen duo can deliver on that promise, just remember—these are the guys who elevated *Jack Kirby's* Darkseid to major super-villain status in ***The Great Darkness Saga*** when everyone else had pretty much abandoned Kirby's contributions to the DCU. But why the Emerald Empress? "Keith always loved the Empress, and we had great fun developing a new one," Levitz said.

Do he and Levitz plan to make the Emerald Empress a Darkseid-level villain? "I believe Keith's quote was 'Bwa-ha-ha!' in a particularly ominous tone of voice," Levitz said.

Now that the two have reunited, any chance of further Levitz-Giffen collaboration? "We're having great fun, and we'll certainly try to do more again soon. The only reason it took so long for us to play again was that I

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

wasn't actively writing—Keith was always trying to get me to do more Legion work with him, and I always liked the idea."

Does the ***Legion Annual*** fit in with the ongoing ***Legion*** story arc? "I've always been unusually persnickety about stuff like that, where I've tried to make the pieces fit together as carefully as I can," Levitz said." So, assuming that everything gets done on time and ships in its natural order, it should connect fairly neatly in with the other pieces.

"It's not so much driving any other story, because the tonality and the opportunity to play with Keith doing the kinds of things he does well makes it logical as a stand-alone. But at a certain point in the next month or two, you'll see a couple Legionnaires going off on vacation, and the next time we see them, they're not having the most fun vacation they possibly could have imagined."

The renewal of the Levitz-Giffen ***Legion*** partnership was a pleasant experience for both creators. " Part of the fun with Keith, based on the story we worked out together, is that he's a great world builder. It's one of the things he did wonderfully on the years we were together on the Legion that he hasn't had a lot of opportunity to do in the conventional DC Universe.

"Keith is such an imaginative thinker that if you give him a set of concepts to work with.... like years ago when we did Shrinking Violet's planet, where we built a whole world for people who could shrink. It was a kind of cool, different visual. We used to sometimes agree that a particular planet would be envisioned in the style of a particular artist—not even necessarily a comic book artist. And that would be enough for Keith to go off and design that whole corner of the universe.

"So that's what he's doing with the planet where this story takes place. You have a planet that is, on some levels, essentially being possessed. It's going through the spiritual equivalent of organically being 'Borged.' And I'm very much looking forward to seeing what he does with that."

The aforementioned Levitz-Giffen ***Great Darkness Saga*** recently return to print in a deluxe hardcover edition—and gauging from sales figures, that reprinting was long overdue! "Thanks to the fans and retailers who helped put ***The Great Darkness Saga*** on the ***New York Times'*** Graphic Novel Best-Seller List... that was an amazing moment in my career!"

Legion of Super-Heroes Annual #1, A $4.99 56-page comic that introduces the new Emerald Empress, is scheduled for December 29th release. ***Adventure Comics #522***, which explores the role of the new Green Lantern of the 31st Century, follows on January 5th. The Durlan plot against the United Planets explodes in ***Legion of Super-Heroes #9***, slated for January 19th release. And the Legion Academy takes center stage in ***Adventure Comics #523***, on sale on February 2nd.

by Cliff Biggers (with Vaneta Rogers)

COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

Produced by *Comic Shop News* in cooperation with *newsarama.com*

Fantastic Four-Play

Marvel has announced that they will *not* overprint ***Fantastic Four #587***, the final issue of *Jonathan Hickman & Steve Epting's* "Three" storyline in which a founding member of the team apparently will die. To ensure that browsers don't ruin the surprise ending prior to reading the comic, Marvel is shipping ***FF #587*** polybagged (something that has rarely been done since the event-driven 1990s when it was best used to help build excitement for the Man of Steel's death in ***Superman #75***).

This change in policy will require retailers to gamble on their orders with no reorder "safety net" should demand exceed their expectations. Since comic shop order comics non-returnable, it might be wise to give your friendly neighborhood comic shop a little bit of guidance by letting them know if this is a must-have book for you—*particularly* if you're not a regular reader of ***FF***. This will

help your comic shop staff gauge the demand for the book in their area, helping to ensure that you find a copy on the stands when you drop by to pick it up.

(And to be even more certain of getting a copy, you might ask if your friendly neighborhood comic shop will allow you to prepay for a copy ahead of time; that way, you know it'll be there whenever you drop by, regardless of demand!)

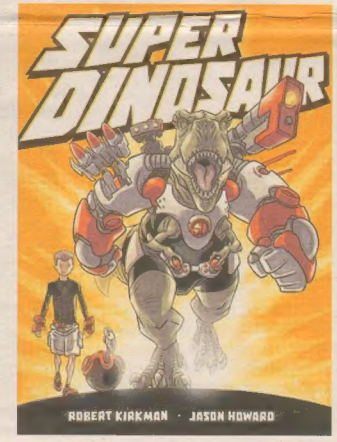
Additionally, Marvel has announced that *John Cassaday* is illustrating a variant cover edition of ***Fantastic Four #587*** that will reveal which member of the team dies. To avoid spoiling the surprise, however, Marvel is shipping this variant on February 2nd, a week after the polybagged edition's January 26th release.

"The surprises in this issues—and what comes next—constitute one of the biggest events in Marvel history," *David Gabriel*, SVP Sales & Circulation, said. "When you see the plans of *Tom Brevoort*, *Jonathan Hickman*, and *Steve Epting* come to fruition, you'll know why we say this is the story everyone will be talking about..."

This has been described as the penultimate issue of ***Fantastic Four;*** presumably, the title will change to ***Fantastic Three*** with #589 to accurately depict the number of living team members.

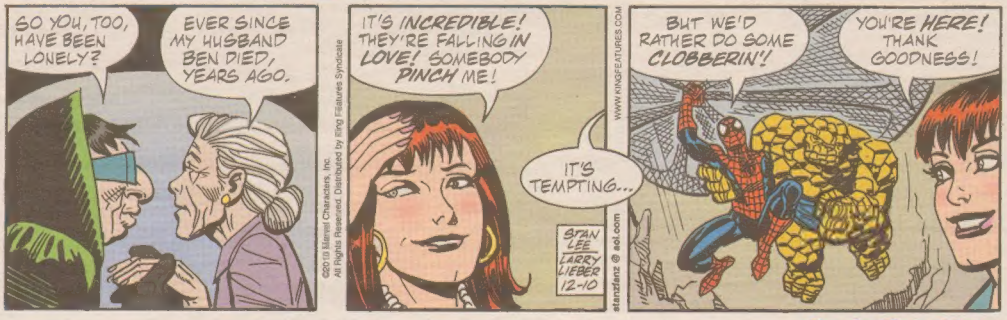
CSNsider

• *Robert Kirkman & Jason Howard* are launching a new ongoing Image series, ***Super Dinosaur,*** which will debut in April under Kirkman's new Skybound imprint. Kirkman describes the project as "a Pixar movie on paper"; the series tells the story of boy genius Derek Dynamo and his best friend, a genetically altered Tyrannosaurus Rex from



SPIDER-MAN

BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER


SO YOU, TOO, HAVE BEEN LONELY?
EVER SINCE MY HUSBAND BEN DIED, YEARS AGO.
IT'S INCREDIBLE! THEY'RE FALLING IN LOVE! SOMEBODY PINCH ME!
IT'S TEMPTING...
BUT WE'D RATHER DO SOME CLOBBERIN'!
YOU'RE HERE! THANK GOODNESS!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 12-10
WWW.KINGFEATURES.COM
stanzlanz @ aol.com
©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Distributed by King Features Syndicate

COMIC SHOP NEWS
Published weekly since 1987 by Comic Shop News, Inc.
©2010 Comic Shop News, Inc. All Rights Reserved

EDITORS Cliff Biggers, Ward Batty

Editorial Office
2770 Carillon Crossing
Marietta, GA 30066
cliffbig@comicshopnews.com

Business Office
3577-A Chamblee-Tucker Rd. #215
Atlanta, GA 30341
(770) 939-1364
wbatty@csnsider.com

www.csnsider.com
twitter.com/csnsider

the inner-Earth who goes by the name of Super Dinosaur. Genius kids, super dinosaurs, hollow earth civilizations... just how much are these guys going to pack in one series, anyway?!

•*Mark Chiarello*, the man who helmed the amazing ***Wednesday Comics*** project for DC, has been promoted to Vice President Art Direction and Design for the company.

•DC editor *Eddie Berganza*, who has been the company's unofficial "event editor" in recent years, has been promoted to the position of Executive Editor of the DC Universe line, where he will work alongside Superman Group Editor *Matt Idelson* and Batman Group Editor *Mike Marts*. Additionally, *John Ficarra* has been named as ***Mad Magazine's*** Vice President, Executive Editor. *Karen Berger* will remain in her position as Senior Vice President, Executive Editor of the Vertigo line.

•*Ian Sattler*, formerly Senior Story Editor at DC, has been promoted to the position of Director-Editorial, Special Projects and Archives.

•So what is CW considering to replace ***Smallville*** (which is reportedly coming to an end after it wraps up its tenth season in the spring of 2011)? Well, reports indicate that a ***Raven*** series is in the works, based on the Teen Titans member created by *Marv Wolfman & George Pérez* in 1980. With a *David E. Kelley* ***Wonder Woman*** series also in early development, TV could be DC's next major territory!

•*Mike Deodato* will supply the art for ***New Avengers #8***, rather than the originally announced *Stuart Immonen;* the book is also being reduced from 40 pages to 32 pages, although the price will remain the same.

•*Darwyn Cooke* is supplying the cover art for the 1-for-10 variant of ***Batman Beyond #1***, slated for early January release. In this ongoing series debut issue designed to offer new readers a perfect jumping-on point for the *Adam Beechen, Ryan Benjamin, & John Stanisci* series. The first issue spotlights the stronger-than-ever post-"Hush" alliance between Terry McGinnis and Bruce Wayne. But now a super-powered criminal has gotten in way over his head - and the whole Justice League has come to Neo-Gotham to hunt him down!

•*Gene Ha* is supplying the cover art for the 1-for-10 variant of ***Batman & Robin #19***, which continues the three-part story by *Paul Cornell & Scott McDaniel* that pits Batman and Robin against the mad villain known as the Absence... and what's a mad villain without an inescapable death trap?

•DC Direct has cancelled orders for the ***Green Lantern Honor Guard Ring Prop Replica***. The collectible will be resolicited in January for release later in 2011.

•*Jill Thompson's* ***Delirium's Party: A Little Endless Storybook HC***, originally slated for March release, has been pushed back to early May.

Lookin' Spry for a Seventy-Year-Old Guy

Captain America is turning seventy next year, and Marvel is marking the event with a series of Captain America 70th Anniversary Variant Covers featuring Cap alongside many of Marvel's most popular characters (please remember, though, that while the covers depict Cap, he isn't necessarily appearing in the books themselves!). The Cap variant books include:

•***Amazing Spider-Man #656*** (variant cover by *Joe Quesada*)

•***Avengers #11*** (variant cover by *Alan Davis*

•***Black Panther: The Man Without Fear #516*** (variant cover by *David Aja)*

•***Deadpool #34*** (variant cover by *Ed McGuinness)*

•***Incredible Hulks #624*** (variant cover by *Dale Keown)*

•***Invincible Iron Man #502*** (variant cover by *Mike Del Mundo)*

•***Secret Avengers #11*** (variant cover by *Simone Bianchi)*

•***Thunderbolts #155*** (variant cover by *Gerald Parel)*

•***Wolverine #7*** (variant cover by *Dave Johnson)*

•***X-Men #9*** (variant cover by *John Tyler Christopher)*

Back to Press

•***Heroes for Hire #1 2nd Printing Walker Variant A*** (OCT108165), in stores 1/12.

•***Heroes for Hire #1 2nd Printing Walker Variant B*** (OCT108166), in stores 1/12.

Looking Ahead to FCBD

Sure, it's still late 2010, but publishers and retailers are already thinking about May 2011 and Free Comic Book Day! The FCBD Committee has announced the Gold Sponsor comics for 2011, and the offerings include the strongest selection of titles in the event's history.

The 2011 offerings include:

•Ape Entertainment's Kizoic flip-book featuring ***Kung Fu Panda*** and ***Richie Rich.***

•Archaia's flip book featuring ***Mouse Guard*** and *Jim Henson's* ***Dark Crystal.***

•Archie Comics' ***Betty & Veronica,*** written and illustrated by *Dan Parent.*

•Boom Studios' flipbook featuring reprints of the sold-out ***Darkwing Duck #1*** and ***Chip 'n' Dale Rescue Rangers #1.***

•Dark Horse's flips book featuring ***Star Wars: Clone Wars*** on one side and ***Avatar: The Last Airbender*** on the other. This is the first indication that Dark Horse has landed the ***Airbender*** license, which was previously held by Del Rey.

•DC's top-secret book, which even Wikileaks can't spill the beans on at this time.

•IDW's ***Locke & Key.***

•Image Comics' secret new all-ages title from ***The Walking Dead*** creator *Robert Kirkman.*

•Marvel's ***Spider-Man*** by *Dan Slott & Humberto Ramos,* promoting the publisher's big summer Spidey event.

•PaperCutz' flipbook featuring ***The Smurfs*** and ***Geronimo Stilton.***

Dynamite's Re-Vamp

After an absence of almost two years, Vampirella has returned to comic shops, complete with a dramatically different focus and a much darker storyline. So how have readers responded to the return of a comic book icon?

"The response has been everything we could have hoped for," Dynamite publisher *Nick Barrucci* said. "I wish I could say it was everything we could have hoped for *and more*, but at least it's everything we could have hoped for! We've put together a great package; *Eric Trautmann* has written some great scripts; *Wagner Reis* has done the art of his career (we really pushed him to create the artwork that would be compelling to the fans); and all the cover artists, from *J. Scott Campbell* to *Joe Madureira* to *Jelena Djurdjevic* to our good friend *Alex Ross*, helped the book shine."

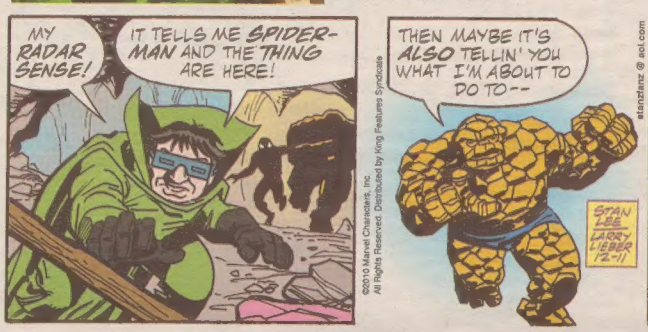
"There's been a lot of positive response," writer *Eric Trautmann* added, "and I'm most pleased that a lot of it is from folks who wouldn't normally have picked up a ***Vampirella*** comic."

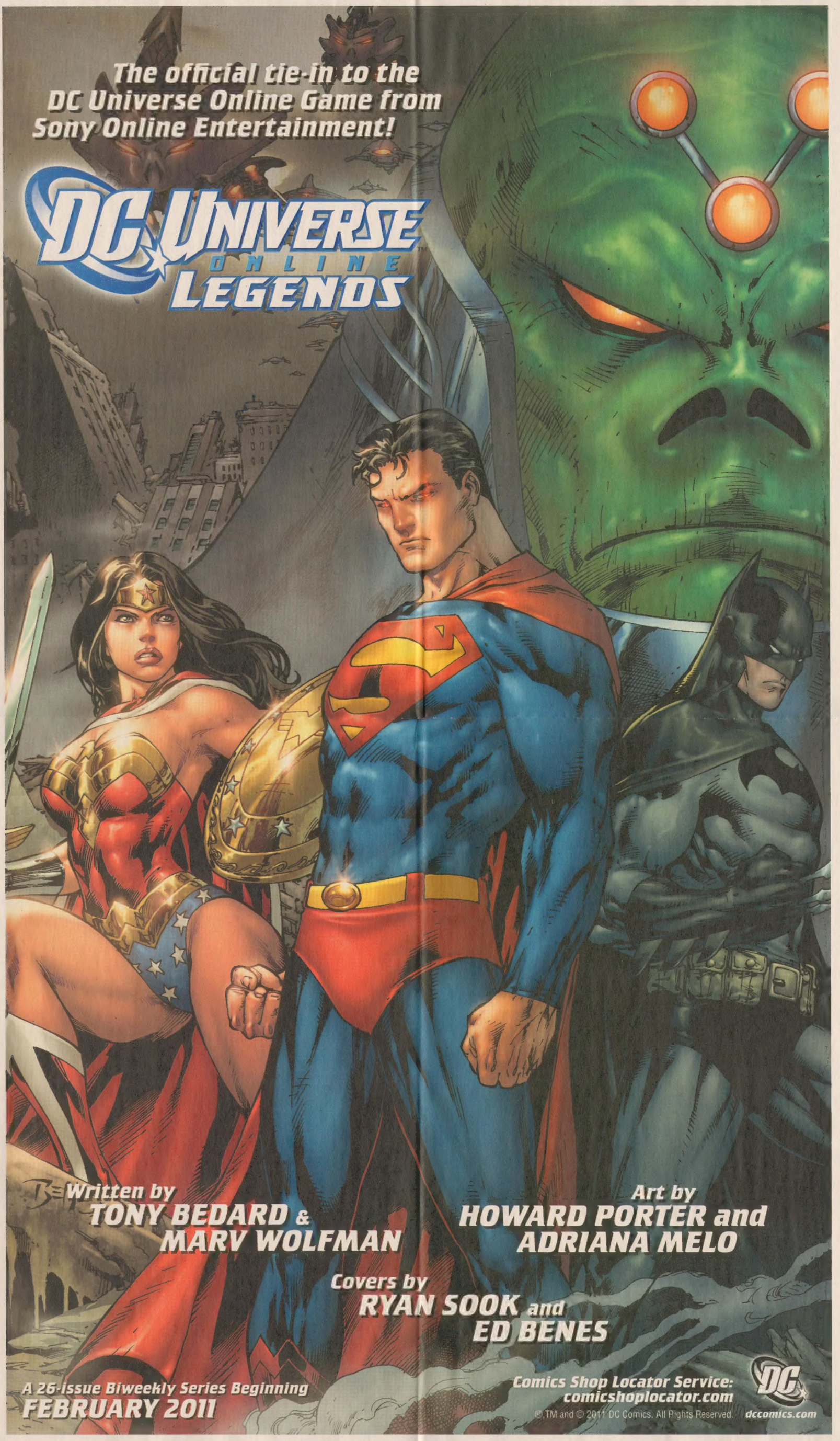
While the relaunched Vampirella retains enough of the original character design to make her recognizeable, her appearance has also been updated; how did the new look come about? "The visual was discussed internally, and we made some suggestions," Barrucci said. "Eric chimed in, the artist started working on it, we gave feedback, and I think it really came together."

The kickoff story casts Vampirella as humanity's defender against Dracula, Le Fanu, and other vampiric menaces, as well as the ominous Crown of Thorns. The story begins with evidence that vampires have begun to make themselves at home in Seattle, seemingly infiltrating even the police force. "It's not so much that society has been infiltrated," Trautmann explained. "The idea is that Dracula breeds this kind of 'rot'—in the form of young, aggressive vampires—in his wake. They're the tracks that Vampirella can follow to track him down. "

While Vlad Dracula only appears as a background character in ***Vampirella #1,*** Trautmann assures readers that he'll take a much more active role in the near future. "We get out first good look at him in ***Vampirella #3,*** and by the fourth issue,

Continued on page 6


MY RADAR SENSE!
IT TELLS ME SPIDER-MAN AND THE THING ARE HERE!
THEN MAYBE IT'S ALSO TELLIN' YOU WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO TO--
YEOWWW!
PERHAPS YOU SHOULD FIGHT MORE AND BOAST LESS, BEN GRIMM!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 12-11
©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Distributed by King Features Syndicate.
elanzfanz @ aol.com



™ TM and © 2011 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved.

you'll see Vampirella and Vlad face to face. It's *not* a happy reunion."

While Vampirella combats the vampire expansion, demonstrating that vampires are not inherently evil, she seems at times a reluctant heroine, unhappy with her lot. " There's a reason that Vampirella is a darker, less innocent character in this issue," Trautmann said. "She's lost Adam, she's spent decades mired in death and blood, and humans tend to fear her. A part of her is asking if its all worth it. 'I love this place. And I hate it, too.' That's her theme statement. So, yes, ***Vampirella*** isn't all sunshine. And her interactions with Vlad aren't exactly what they seem, either."

It's not just vampires that she must confront: the ominous Crown of Worms, with its overtones of *H.P. Lovecraft*, add even more evil to the mix. "We're about to see just what the Crown can do," Trautmann said. "I can assure you that there's a definite Lovecraft vibe to the Crown of Worms, by design. By the end of the six-issue arc, all will be clear."

In addition to the lead story, Dynamite offered a surprising nod to Vampirella's heritage with the first issue's backup story, "Mr. Goodwin," which featured legendary editor-writer *Archie Goodwin*, a member of the original Warren Magazines ***Vampirella*** more than forty years ago. Can readers expect to see more little gems like this in upcoming issues. "We'll see," Barrucci said. "It was, of course, nice to be able to give a nod to such a beloved writer/editor. We *do* need to move the character forward; however, where it's appropriate, we are going to do take time to acknowledge her heritage as well— and we felt doing this little story in the first issue was more than appropriate."

What other plans does Dynamite have for the sultry vampire? "We're evaluating whether to do miniseries or one shots— we've got some really cool talent that's interested," Barrucci said. "If we get the right stories we'll continue, adding more to the mythos; if not, we have a solid monthly title that we are very proud of!"

Vampirella #1 is currently available in comic shops; ***Vampirella #2*** is scheduled for early January release.

Get Rich—Quick!

A couple of months ago, we told you that ***Richie Rich*** was returning to comics, complete with an updated concept and a new look. Now we can tell you which creators will be responsible for reintroducing readers to the world's richest kid!

The new series will be written by a talented team that includes *Tom DeFalco, Bill Williams, Buddy Scalera, Brent E. Erwin, Jason M. Burns, Matt Anderson, Rob Worley,* and more. They'll be joined by artists *Tina Francisco, Jack Lawrence, Armando Zanker, James Silvani,* and *Iwan Nazif,* among others. And fans of the Harvey series will be particularly thrilled to here that the original creative team of *Sid Jacobson & Ernie Colon* will also revisit the characters they helped to make famous, returning with two, all-new stories!

"Ape Entertainment is extremely pleased with the writers and artists who have come forward to bring ^ back to comics," co-publisher *David Hedgecock* said. "We have action. We have adventure. We have humor. And best of all, we have everyone's favorite characters, from Cadbury to Irona to Dollar."

The Ape Entertainment ***Richie Rich*** series recasts the character as "part James Bond, Jr., and part Indiana Jones, with Donald Trump's bank account... an altruistic adventurer who travels the world helping the less fortunate." The first issue is slated for May 2011 release.

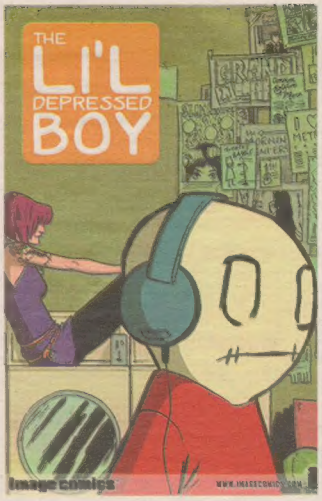
Image Supports Freedom of Depress

Can ***Li'l Depressed Boy*** fans actually *be* happy? If it's possible, then this is the news that can put a smile on their sad faces: Image Comics is releasing the first-ever collection of *S. Steven Struble's* popular webcomic about the everyday life of a ragdoll with the February release of ***Li'l Depressed Boy #1.***

Early installments of Struble's offveat creation wre illustrated by such talents as *Sam Keith, Jamie McKelvie,* and *Jim Mahfood. Sina Grace* (whose illustrations can be seen in such publications as actress Amber Benson's young adult novel Among the Ghosts) took over as regular artist for the webcomic the web comic in 2008.

In the first issue, Li'l Depressed Boy meets girl in a story that packs all the romantic and stylish lovelorn charm that should appeal to fans of movies like ***(500) Days of Summer.***

"The Li'l Depressed Boy comes from so many personal experiences, which I think correlates to why people relate to the story," said Struble. "We've all been that quiet person who can barely muster a smile. With Sina as the regular artist and our first story arc together under the Image 'I,' it's a dream come true."



"When I started drawing ***Li'l Depressed Boy,***" Grace said, "I was so excited to be collaborating with someone who wanted to tackle comics the same way I did: with earnestness, fun, and a touch of self-deprecation. After all these years, I'm happy to say that the work we are presenting with Image Comics maintains those core values."

Look for ***Li'l Depressed Boy*** #1 in early February.

Ten Who Made 2010

Remember when artists were the rock stars of the comic book world? Well, times have changed! More than ever before, 2010 was the Year of the Writer—and here are the ten writers who defined the year in comics!

1. **Geoff Johns** - No doubt about it, 2010 was *Geoff Johns'* year. (So was 2009, for that matter!) ***Blackest Night,*** the mega-event that spanned both years, raised the bar for event storytelling. He kept the ***Blackest Night*** synergy sizzling as cowriter of the biweekly ***Brightest Day.*** He made the once-moribund ***Green Lantern*** one of DC's biggest franchises. He introduced the Justice Society to viewers of ***Smallville,*** much to the delight of comics fans. He brought Barry Allen back into the mainstream of the DCU, recapturing the Flash's sense of wonder and paving the way for 2011's ***FlashPoint*** event at the same time. He became DC's first Chief Creative Officer, charged with the responsibility of making sure that the richness of the DCU is properly interpreted in other media.

So what's left for you to do in 2011, Mr. Johns?

Grant Morrison photo by Jason Mouratides

2. **Grant Morrison** - Typically, when a writer leaves a plothole unexplored, it's an oversight. When *Grant Morrison* leaves a plothole unexplored, rest assured that he's coming back to it. It may take a few months, it may take a couple of years—but he *always* comes back to it. It's that genius-obsessive attention to minute detail that is a defining point of Morrison's comics—and nowhere was it more visible than on his ***Batman*** work. ***Batman and Robin, Batman, Batman: The Return of Bruce Wayne***—each of them linked to the other in myriad ways, with only the tiniest plot points offering any clue as to where he was going with 2010's resurrection story of the year.

Will he wow us again in 2011 with ***Multiversity?*** We can only hope that DC finds room for this remarkable saga in an already-event-packed year!...

3. **J. Michael Straczynski** - After launching his DC career with a slow start (***The Brave and the Bold)*** and a near-stumble (the ***Red Circle*** oneshots), JMS found his stride with his takeover of ***Superman*** and ***Wonder Woman.*** Under his direction, the former found his humanity once again, while the latter lost her heritage at the hands of a brutal enemy. But it was

YOUR BRUTE STRENGTH WILL NEVER PREVAIL AGAINST MY RADAR SENSE, BEN GRIMM.
RADAR SENSE... SPIDER SENSE--
STAN LEE
LARRY LIEBER
12-13
©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc.
All Rights Reserved. Distributed by King Features Syndicate

Straczynski's ***Superman: Earth One***, with its recreation of the Man of Steel for the 21st Century, that secured his place in this year's top ten. (Although, truth be told, we still think his "Grounded" multiparter in ***Superman*** is the better tale...) In the aftermath of ***Earth One's*** phenomenal reception, JMS has said goodbye to monthly comics for now, devoting himself to original graphic novels. Now we'll be watching to see if JMS can recapture lightning in a bottle in 2011!

4. **Brian Bendis** - Remember when ***The Avengers*** was the book that everyone used to like, but kept buying out of a sense duty? That was before *Brian Bendis* pushed the superteam into the spotlight with a series of events, disassembling one team and reassembling another new team. In 2010, he brought the franchise full circle with the dual relaunch of ***The Avengers*** and ***New Avengers***, bringing back the superstar fan-favorites in one title while keeping some of the popular newcomers in the other. And for good measure, he sent the three most popular Avengers—Steve Rogers, Tony Stark, and Thor—on their own quest to rediscover the bonds that once united them.

That would be enough to fill the calendar of almost any writer, but Bendis is a comics superscribe. In addition to a trio of ***Avengers*** titles, he also wrote numerous ***Ultimate*** projects, including ***Ultimate Spider-Man*** (the title that every writer should have to read in its entirety before writing the first sentence of any ***Ultimate*** storyline). And then there's his creator-owned work in ***Powers*** and ***Scarlet***... The medium could benefit from more writers with Bendis' dedication and professionalism—and of course, his impeccable story sense.

5. **Robert Kirkman** - Kirkman has been Image's ace in the hole for years—the only writer under the **i** capable of bringing readers back month after month. But 2010 propelled Kirkman to superstar status overnight, thanks to AMC and a little six-part teevee show called ***The Walking Dead***. Suddenly Kirkman's zombie series has a life of its own, the collected volumes are best-sellers, and people who haven't seen the inside of a comic shop in years (if ever) are ***Walking Dead***-heads. And in an almost unprecedented example of comic book synergy, Kirkman even arranges to have the 79th issue of the comic and the collection of #s 73-78 hit the racks on the same day—meaning that it was possible for *every* ***Walking Dead*** reader to get current. Great storytelling talent *and* business sense? If only more writers had *that* mutant ability...

6. **Bryan Lee O'Malley** - *Bryan Lee O'Malley's* tale of romance, obsession, and insecurity was years in the making, but 2010 marked both the finale to his long-running ***Scott Pilgrim*** OGN series *and* the debut of ***Scott Pilgrim*** the film. Of course, we hated to see ***Scott Pilgrim*** come to an end... but what an end it was! So what's next from the talented Mr. O'Malley? Too early to say—but we know it'll be on our must-read list!

Brian Lee O'Malley photo by Gage Skidmore

7. **Mark Millar** - Skilled storyteller and premier self-promoter, *Mark Millar* is a sort of Stan Lee for the 21st Century. Not only does he know how to tell a great story, but he knows how to tell everyone he's telling a great story. Not only is Millar a publicity master, he's also a capable writer with the chops to push the envelope (check out his ***Kick Ass 2***, ***Superior***, and *Nemesis* for proof). He's also a multi-level-marketing genius, promoting himself with his own magazine ***CLiNT*** (we'll even forgive him the sophomoric in-joke title), and just last month he announced that he's working on his own convention as well.

Mark Millar photo by Luigi Novi

8. **Garth Ennis** - *Garth Ennis* is the comic book equivalent of the superstar musician who turned his back on the major labels, taking his talents to an indy label instead. Ennis was a top talent at both DC/Vertigo and Marvel, producing such unforgettable works as ***Preacher*** and ***Punisher***—but he left the major labels behind, preferring to produce his work at Dynamite and Avatar, where he could tell his tales without compromises. His ***Battlefields*** is one of the best war comics ever published, presenting war in real terms rather than as a conflict of superheroes-in-khaki. But without a doubt, his scathing look at the ugliness, decadence, egotism, and excess behind the superhero facade makes ***The Boys*** a high point of his multi-stories career.

Garth Ennis photo by pinguino k

9. **Paul Levitz** - *Paul Levitz's* departure as DC's President and Publisher marked the end of an era—but it made way for the beginning off another era refocusing on his writing (you know, the stuff he had all too little time for when he was busy keeping DC on course). Levitz made us forget about all those failed ***Legion of Super-Heroes*** reboots of the past; now we have the ***Legion*** we've been waiting for, complete with its very own 31st century Green Lantern Corps. At the same time, Levitz the historian produced the heaviest comic book history ever published—***75 Years of DC Comics***. (And it's fitting that Levitz should be the man to tell that tale, since he was involved with the company for more than half of that time.)

10. **Alan Moore** - The love-hate relationship with comics continues with ***Neonomicon***, Moore's venture into world Lovecraftean. Does it push the edge? Of course! Is there more here than meets the eye? Certainly? Is it possible that some are reading even more into it than Moore intended? Quite possibly. Nevertheless, ***Neonomicon*** is one of the most disturbing comic book forays into Lovecraftean territory ever attempted. Ever the iconoclast, Moore continues to work with small companies that lack the budget to fully market and promote the man's genius, but we're happy he's working in comics at all! Will ***Neonomicon*** be Moore's final project (other than the in-progress ***League of Extraordinary Gentlemen***). We certainly hope not! (Moore's work is also a major part of his offbeat Northampton-focused alternative magazine ***Dodgem Logic***—and yes, Moore was the *first* major writer to launch his own magazine in 2010, beating Millar by a few months!)

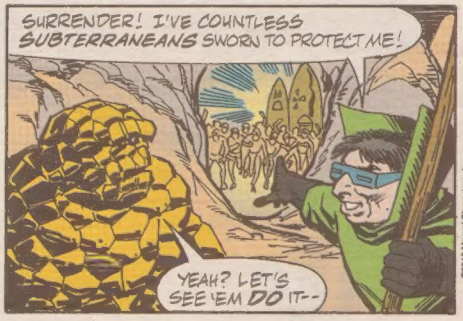
Alan Moore photo by Gaius Cornelius

Honorable Mention

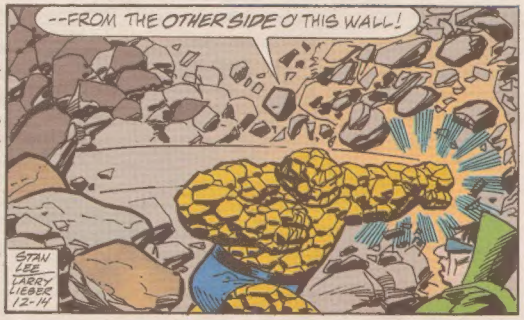
Jim Shooter - It's not often that a writer gets a second opportunity to relaunch the same characters, but that's exactly what happened to *Jim Shooter* in 2010. The man who masterminded the ***Magnus*** and ***Solar*** phenomenon back in the Valiant days was given the same toys once again in 2010—but this time, he rebooted the former Gold Key heroes for Dark Horse. And once again, Shooter outdid the Silver Age source material. Even better, he got to make up for Valiant's fumbled ***Turok*** relaunch with a series that captured the essence of the originals while packing a contemporary storytelling punch. So what's past glories can Shooter revisit (and revitalize) in 2011? Y'know, Marvel hasn't done a *Secret Wars* in a while...

Jim Shooter photo by Nightscream

twitter.com/csnsider



©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Distributed by King Features Syndicate

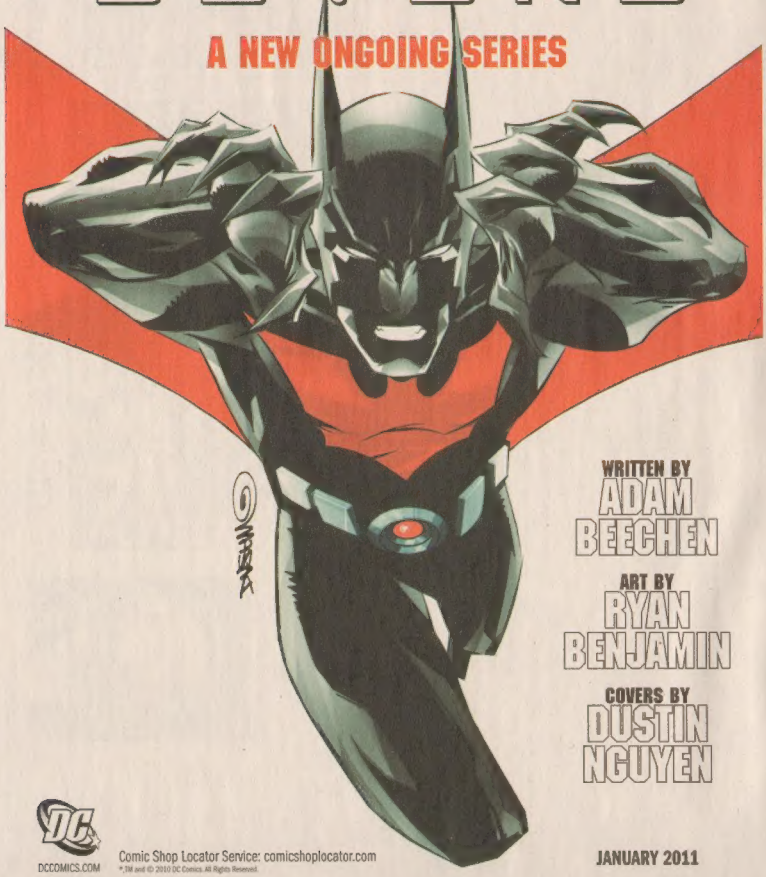


Follow *Spider-Man* every week in *Comic Shop News*!

THE FUTURE BEGINS NOW!

BATMAN BEYOND

A NEW ONGOING SERIES



WRITTEN BY
ADAM BEECHEN

ART BY
RYAN BENJAMIN

COVERS BY
DUSTIN NGUYEN

DCCOMICS.COM

Comic Shop Locator Service: comicshoplocator.com

*,™ and © 2010 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved.

JANUARY 2011